



ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN INDIA

Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Background: Online shopping is one of the common modes of purchase among students; at the same time, it can cause a significant impact on them. **Objective:** To assess the online shopping behavior and its impact among undergraduate students. **Methods:** 150 undergraduate students from various professional and non-professional colleges in Ranchi, Jharkhand, participated in this cross-sectional study. Samples were selected using a simple random sampling method. We collected data using a demographic proforma, a self-structured questionnaire, and a five-point rating scale. The data were analysed using SPSS version 16.0 and Jamovi version 2.3.28. Frequency and percentage, mean and standard deviation, and the Kruskal-Wallis test were used. **Results:** The study showed that the majority of the samples shopped more than twice annually (78%) and favored Flipkart (65.3%) over other online shopping platforms, with fashion accessories accounting for the majority of purchases (42.7%). The study's findings indicate that the majority of the sample made purchases based on product quality (74.0%), while 56.0% expressed a preference for online shopping because it eliminated the need for travel. The study also found online shopping sites that provide high security have the highest mean and standard deviation (11.4 + 2.20), closely followed by convenience (11.1 + 2.47). The study also found a substantial psychological impact due to online shopping among undergraduate male and female students. (χ^2 4.443, p 0.035, ϵ^2 0.02982). **Conclusion:** Online shopping has become a ubiquitous part of undergraduate life, offering both benefits and challenges. By fostering financial literacy and responsible consumer habits, students can enjoy the advantages of e-commerce without compromising their well-being.

KEYWORDS

Online shopping behavior, Impacts, Undergraduate students

INTRODUCTION

In the age of the Internet, E-Commerce has emerged as a significant market. Online shopping has emerged as the third most popular activity on the internet, trailing only behind emails and browsing [1]. Online shopping refers to the act of acquiring products via the internet instead of obtaining them from physical retail locations. This allows consumers to explore a range of products, select their preferred items, complete online payments, and receive deliveries at their chosen locations [2].

Online shopping in India gained popularity in the early 2000s. Companies such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, and Snapdeal were regarded as the pioneers of the Indian e-commerce business. Founded in 2007, Flipkart was considered one of the initial significant participants in the e-commerce business [3]. According to estimates, Indian e-commerce is worth 99 billion US dollars as of 2024 and is expected to grow to 220 million by 2025 [4].

Online shopping gives us access to a vast array of goods and services without requiring us to be physically present while buying. Using a laptop or computer with internet allows us to access any online services or market in less than a second [5]. The influence of advertisements, comparisons with other groups, the consumer's readiness to purchase products, and, crucially, the customer's expectations and needs determine online shopping activity [6]. In addition, purchasing behavior also rely on various other internal and external factors such as situational, psychological, environmental, and marketing factors, personal factors, family, salary level, age, gender and culture etc.

Online shopping behaviours encompass searching, selecting, purchasing, and utilising products through the internet. Impulsive Buying Behaviour, or Oniomania, is increasingly common; in the

United States, its prevalence among the population is 5.8%. Oniomania can result in distractions, financial crises, and diminished academic performance [7]. Online buying may potentially possess psychological and emotional ramifications for undergraduate students. It may function as a means of stress alleviation, escapism, or satisfaction, although it can also result in emotions of guilt, remorse, or addictive behaviours [8].

Despite the increasing trend of online shopping among students, there is currently no documented research on this topic among undergraduate students in Jharkhand, India. To address this gap, this study examines online shopping behavior among undergraduate students in Jharkhand, India, and its impact among male and female undergraduate students. The findings of the study will help shed light on the current scenario of online shopping among undergraduate students.

METHODS

This cross-sectional survey was done among diverse undergraduate students in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, India. A total of three colleges were selected using a simple random method that include a nursing college and two college imparts non-professional graduation courses under Ranchi university. The study samples were recruited from May 2023 to June 2023, and data collection took place from June 27, 2023, to October 4, 2023, after obtaining written consent from the participants. The study included individuals aged 18 to 24 years who provided their consent to participate and reported no physical ailments.

A total of 150 samples were included, maintaining a 95% confidence interval and 5% permissible error. The formula utilised to determine the study sample was $n = 4pq/d^2$. To report the study, we used the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) guideline for cross-sectional studies.

This study identified potential exposure such as availability of a variety of products and time-saving benefits, with predictor variables including age, gender, and income. The possible confounding factors in this study included the socioeconomic status of the student's family and the distinction between urban and rural residence.

A demographic proforma was used to gather sample characteristics, while a structured validated questionnaire comprising seven items was utilised to assess the current status of online shopping. The online shopping behaviour of undergraduate students was assessed using a five-point rating scale, which consists of five primary domains, each containing three sub-items. The influence of economical, physical, and psychological factors of internet buying was evaluated by a standardised questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed individually. The tool was validated for relevance, accuracy, and appropriateness, yielding ICVI and SCVI values of 1, and a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.9 for all tools. Institutions were selected randomly to prevent selection bias.

Covariates

Demographic proforma was used to assess the covariates, which included age, gender (male or female), age, course of study (professional or non-professional), educational status of the father and mother, occupational status of the father and mother, financial status of the family, source of monthly income, area of residence (urban, rural, semi-rural, or semi-urban), and frequency of online purchases.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted in October 2024 using SPSS version 16 and Jamovi version 2.3.28. All tests were 2-tailed, and $P<0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

The socio-demographic factors and the current scenario of online purchasing were assessed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage. The factors affecting online shopping were assessed using mean and standard deviation. The Kruskal-Wallis test was implemented to evaluate the impact of online shopping behaviour on males and females.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Characteristics

Most of the study samples were females 68.0%) whereas male constituted 32 %. Samples from both the professional and non-professional courses were equally distributed at 50% each. The majority of parents attained education up to the graduation level, with 43.3% of fathers and 32% of mothers reaching this milestone. In contrast, a significant portion of the parents were unskilled workers, accounting for 43.3% and 48.7% respectively. Most of the samples had a family income ranging from 9308 to 27882 per month. The primary source of monthly income for the majority of the samples was pocket money, accounting for 45.3%. Interestingly, the majority of the samples were from rural areas, accounting for 54.7% (Table 1).

Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristics Of The Included Samples N=150

	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	48	32
Female	102	68
Course of study		
Professional	75	50
Non-professional	75	50
Education status of the father		
Professional	8	5.3
Graduate	65	43.3
Intermediate/Diploma	24	16
High school	29	19.3
Middle school	4	2.7
Primary school	18	12
Illiterate	2	1.3
Education status of mother		
Professional	12	8
Graduate	48	32
Intermediate/diploma	18	12
High school	33	22
Middle school	4	2.7

Primary school	21	14
Illiterate	14	9.3
Occupation status of father		
Professional	22	14.7
Semi profession	16	10.7
Clerical/shop/farm	20	13.3
Semi skilled worker	21	14
Un skilled worker	65	43.3
Unemployed	6	4
Occupation status of mother		
professional	13	8.7
Semi profession	9	6.0
Clerical/shop/farm	9	6.0
Semi skilled worker	8	5.3
Un skilled worker	73	48.7
Unemployed	38	25.4
Financial status of the family		
More than 185895	15	10.0
92951-185894	17	11.3
69535-92950	18	12.0
46475-69534	22	14.7
27883-46474	20	13.3
9308-27882	32	21.3
Less than 9307	26	17.3
Source of monthly income		
self employed	33	22.0
Salaried	28	18.7
pocket money	68	45.3
Scholarship	21	14.0
Area of residence		
Rural	82	54.7
Urban	49	32.7
Semi urban	19	12.6

Current Status Of Online Shopping

A significant majority of the samples engaged in online purchases more than twice within a year, accounting for 78.0%. A total of 65.3% of samples indicated a preference for purchasing from Flipkart. Whereas The majority of the sample indicated a preference for purchasing fashion accessories, clothing, shoes, and cosmetics, accounting for 42.7%. This was followed by electronics and groceries, each representing 22% of the preferences. A majority of the samples (54.0%) acquired items when they were in need. Most of the sample's purchase based on the product quality (74.0%). 56.0% of samples indicated a preference for online shopping due to the absence of travel required for shopping.64.7% of those surveyed rated their online shopping experience positively. 59.3% of the total samples allocate more than 5000 per month (Table 2).

Table 2: Current Scenario Of Online Shopping N=150

	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Frequency of purchase		
Once in a month	15	10.0
Twice in a month	18	12.0
More than two times in a year	117	78
Preferred online site		
Flipkart	98	65.3
Amazon	22	14.7
Myntra	14	9.3
Others	16	10.7
Commonly purchased items		
Fashion accessories/clothing/shoes/cosmetics	64	42.7
Stationaries	20	13.3
Electronics	33	22.0
Groceries and daily uses	33	22.0
Preferred time for purchasing		
at leisure	4	2.7
on need	81	54.0
offer or promotion	13	8.7
mood or desire	52	34.7
Factor influencing choice for purchase		
Product quality or product prize	111	74.0

Time to acquire product	24	16.0
Trusting the seller	5	3.3
Others	10	6.7
Reason for online shopping		
Easy payment	19	12.7
No hidden cost	10	6.7
No travelling to do shopping	84	56.0
Wide range of product	37	24.7
Online shopping experience		
Excellence	15	10.0
Good	97	64.7
Average	35	23.3
Poor	3	2.0
Amount spend for online shopping per month		
< 5000	61	40.7
>5000	89	59.3

Factors affecting Online shopping among undergraduate students
Online shopping sites that provide high security have the highest mean and standard deviation of factors affecting online shopping (11.4 + 2.20), closely followed by convenience (11.1 + 2.47). The mean and standard deviation of samples who preferred online shopping due to website design were 10.9 + 2.23, whereas time saving was 10.7 + 2.72. Those who thought online shopping could result in financial risk scored 7.49 + 2.68 (Table 3)

Table 3: Factors Affecting Online Shopping Among Undergraduate Students N=150

Factors	Mean + SD
Convenience	11.1 + 2.47
Website design	10.9 + 2.23
Security	11.4 + 2.20
Time saving	10.7 + 2.72
Financial Risk	7.49 + 2.68

Impact of online shopping among undergraduate student
The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to assess the impact of online shopping on male and female undergraduate students, and the results showed no socioeconomic (χ^2 1.421, p 0.233, ϵ^2 0.00954) and physical impact (χ^2 0.377, p 0.539, ϵ^2 0.00253) but a substantial psychological impact is observed (χ^2 4.443, p 0.035, ϵ^2 0.02982) (Table 4).

Table 4: Impact Of Online Shopping Among Male And Female Undergraduate Students

	N=150			
	χ^2	df	p	ϵ^2
Socio economic impact	1.421	1	0.233	0.00954
Physical impact	0.377	1	0.539	0.00253
Psychological impact	4.443	1	0.035	0.02982

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate online shopping habits and their impacts among undergraduate students and found that most undergraduate students engage in online shopping more than twice a year, primarily purchasing fashion accessories, clothing, shoes, and cosmetics. Interestingly, most of the sample purchased items when they were in need, based on the product quality and the absence of travel requirements, and spent less than \$5,000 per month.

This result aligns with other studies that demonstrate that students' demographic attributes, purchase intention, and purchase experience-which reflect factors such as income, accessibility, convenience, product description, online usage, frequency of purchases, and time spent-are the primary predictors of online shopping [9]. Other studies indicate customers prefer online shopping because of time savings and convenience, closely followed by quick payment gateways and timely delivery [10], and mostly purchase new products, followed by fashion products, electronics, skincare, accessories, etc. [11].

The study found that samples favoured online buying sites that offer high security, closely followed by convenience. Conversely, time-saving financial risk received a lower score.

The study's findings are consistent with previous research, which identifies seven factors that influence consumer online buying behaviour: perceived ease of use, perceived risk, perceived usefulness,

effect of website design, economic factor, availability of product, and consumption. However, online shopping intuitions significantly influence perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness [12].

Although online shopping has its own positive features, such as a variety of products, quick payment, convenience, and discounts, it has its own negative impacts. The simple access to various online products can lead to impulsive purchasing, a financial burden on parents, and a dependence on immediate gratification. The pressure to conform to society and peer groups can further negatively impact students' mental health, socioeconomic status, and physical health.

Given how online shopping affects undergraduates, this study looked into the physical, socioeconomic, and psychological effects of online shopping among undergraduates and found that online shopping has a big effect on both male and female students' mental health (χ^2 4.443, p 0.035, μ^2 0.02982).Interestingly, some of the previous studies conducted in this area primarily focused on factors affecting online shopping [13] or factors that motivate the consumer towards online shopping [14]. This study focused on the impact of online shopping among undergraduate students and empirically supports other study results that show that online shopping addiction is a predictor of negative emotions [12].

The findings of our study indicate that the online shopping habits of undergraduates are significantly influenced by the need for high security and convenience. However, the study also emphasises the considerable psychological effects experienced by undergraduate students. It is advisable to establish a boundary for online shopping, such as setting a financial budget prior to making purchases and determining what items to buy beforehand. Additionally, it is recommended to detox from online advertisements to avoid being distracted by various products. Students are encouraged to make purchases based on necessity and to exercise self-control when buying items. It is essential for parents and carers to educate students from a young age about financial management, and students should also gain knowledge about financial literacy to manage their finances effectively.

Limitations

The study included a smaller sample size. A large, diverse population could give a clearer picture about the current scenario of online shopping.

CONCLUSIONS

Online shopping has become a ubiquitous part of undergraduate life, offering both benefits and challenges. While it enhances convenience and accessibility, it also necessitates a conscious effort to mitigate financial and psychological risks. By fostering financial literacy and responsible consumer habits, students can enjoy the advantages of e-commerce without compromising their well-being.

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